

Wednesday 8 December 2021 was my first citizenship ceremony as Mayor. On the night, we warmly welcomed sixteen South Gippslanders as Australian citizens. It was a lovely event and great to have a gathering of community members after so long. Welcome to:

- Dorothy Birks, Mirboo North – originally from New Zealand.
- Kiran Cheema-Racher, Dollar – originally from India.
- Glacy Eastwood, Poowong – originally from the Philippines.
- Philip Ede, Nyora – originally from the United Kingdom.
- Ashton Harvard, Mirboo North – originally from Britain.
- Jitender Pal, Korumburra – originally from India.
- Heather Le Roy, Walkerville – originally from Northern Ireland.
- Jeanne St Ellen, Mirboo North – originally from the United States of America.
- Gordon Thompson, Leongatha – originally from England.
- Thanh Tran, Foster – originally from Vietnam.
- Satish Venna, Foster – originally from India.
- Haihan Zheng, Leongatha – originally from China.
- Jacqueline Cahill, Bena – originally from Britain.
- Caroline Jane Houston, Nerrena – originally from Scotland.
- Kevin Kuman Jeewoonarain, Mardan – originally from Mauritius.
- Tejus Mistry, Mirboo North – originally from Britain.

On Tuesday 7 December, myself and a number of other Councillors and senior staff went on a bus trip to view some of the significant projects underway around the Shire. It was a busy day in which we visited a number of projects and towns along the way. One of these that is really close to my heart was the Leongatha Early Years Centre construction site in Leongatha. After being a kindergarten teacher for many years, the education of young people is very important to me. I believe this project will be a great asset for our community and will help support the education of our young people into the future.

I look forward to more trips like this during our term as Councillors.

Over the weekend, a number of events took place around our community, a really strong sign that things are starting to get back to normal post-COVID.

In Leongatha on Saturday, there was a Christmas Carnival on Bair Street. This was also the opening of the newly revitalised Bair Street. It was fantastic to see the street bustling with activity and Christmas cheer. Without the upgrade to this main thoroughfare, an event like this would have been limited, so I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who has been involved in this terrific transformation and in the organising of the Christmas Carnival.

The Mirboo North Medical Centre was also opened on Saturday. This much-needed facility has been a long time coming for the Mirboo North community, and I'm sure they are now very excited to have this building as part of their streetscape. Congratulations to all involved in this project and in the opening celebrations over the weekend.

There were also four community pop-ups as part of the extensive program of Community Vision work taking place. The pop-ups were in Leongatha at the Christmas Carnival, Korumburra at the Coal Creek Market, Venus Bay Community Centre and Kongwak Market and were an opportunity for our community to provide input into the Community Vision and allow Council another forum to reach deeply into the community. This project relies on the open feedback of the community, that includes everyone, from every different walk of life and part of our community. This Vision aims to be reflective of our diverse community, and these events will help ensure that is achieved. There will be many more opportunities like this in the New Year. All the information can be found at www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/vision

I strongly encourage everyone to get involved and make your voice heard.

Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor